

15 February 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Downey and Fecteau

DOCUMENT NO.
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. EXEMPTED TO: TS S 2011
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 10-2
DATE: 25 MAR 1981 REVIEWER:

25X1

1. The following persons were present at a meeting in the Department of Defense on 14 February 1957:

Col. Bradish J. Smith, OSO/OSD
James Kelliher, OSO/OSD
Orvil Splitt, Office of Public Affairs, OSD
 Chief, FE
William V. Broe, Chief, FE

2. Col. Smith had requested a meeting, stating that the Defense Department was concerned about the text of the proposed press release for use in the event Downey and Fecteau came out of China. As the meeting developed it became obvious that the Defense Department's concern hinged on what they felt to be an extremely hostile press attitude that had been engendered by the Department of State's refusal to permit correspondents to visit Communist China. They were fearful that if Downey and Fecteau were released in the near future the press, because of this hostility, would refuse to be satisfied with the present non-committal statement, but would use the statement and the whole Downey and Fecteau affair to embarrass the Secretary of State in retaliation for his attitude on the entrance of newsmen into China.

3. In the course of the discussion the OSD representatives agreed that there was little that could be done to change the present agreed-upon press release and concurred with the CIA representatives' position that expanding on it in any way could only result in the most embarrassing complications. It was their feeling, however, that, based on the sentiments expressed in Paragraph 1 above, CIA in the person of the Director, should make representations to the Secretary of State to insure a friendlier press. The CIA representatives present expressed themselves as not being alarmed over the situation, but agreed that it might be useful to express the Paragraph 1 problem to the Department of State as a factor in their consideration of the newsmen-in-China problem. Accordingly, it was agreed that Col. Smith and the CIA representatives would meet with Mr. Walter McConaughy of the Department of State during the coming week for this purpose.

State, OSD reviews completed

Chief, FE

SECRET

25X1

15 February 1957

Executive Registry
9-1170

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Downey and Fecteau

DOCUMENT NO. _____
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 3 **02011**
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: **25 MAR 1981** REVIEWER: _____

25X1

1. The following persons were present at a meeting in the Department of Defense on 14 February 1957:

25X1

Col. Bradish J. Smith, OSO/OSD

25X1

James Kelliher, OSO/OSD

25X1

Orville Solitt, Office of Public Affairs, OSD

25X1

_____, Chief, FE _____

William V. Broe, Chief, FE _____

2. Col. Smith had requested a meeting, stating that the Defense Department was concerned about the text of the proposed press release for use in the event Downey and Fecteau came out of China. As the meeting developed it became obvious that the Defense Department's concern hinged on what they felt to be an extremely hostile press attitude that had been engendered by the Department of State's refusal to permit correspondents to visit Communist China. They were fearful that if Downey and Fecteau were released in the near future the press, because of this hostility, would refuse to be satisfied with the present non-committal statement, but would use the statement and the whole Downey and Fecteau affair to embarrass the Secretary of State in retaliation for his attitude on the entrance of newsmen into China.

3. In the course of the discussion the OSD representatives agreed that there was little that could be done to change the present agreed-upon press release and concurred with the CIA representatives' position that expanding on it in any way could only result in the most embarrassing complications. It was their feeling, however, that, based on the sentiments expressed in Paragraph 1 above, CIA in the person of the Director, should make representations to the Secretary of State to insure a friendlier press. The CIA representatives present said they were not alarmed over the situation and they saw no reason for any demarche by the DCI. They did say that, in their opinion, the point raised by the Defense representatives was, however, one which Defense might wish to make to the Department of State as a factor in the Department's consideration of the newsmen-in-China problem. The CIA representatives refused Col. Smith's request that CIA carry the problem to the Department, but they did agree to set up a meeting with Mr. Walter McConaughy of the Department of State for two purposes:

SECRET

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE **96/0400-1**

See Downey & Fecteau

~~SECRET~~

- a. To enable the Defense representatives to present their point to Mr. McConnaughy.
- b. To enable Mr. McConnaughy to explain to the Defense representatives the Department's policy on the newsmen, thus avoiding the necessity of CIA acting as a middleman between the two departments.

4. It was made clear to the Department of Defense representatives in the course of discussion that we were not alarmed over the point raised, although we felt that it might be worthy of mention. The CIA representatives also made it clear that it was not our purpose in any meeting with Mr. McConnaughy to be critical of the matter in which the Department of State was handling the newsmen-in-China problem and that the main point of the meeting was to have Defense put its views to the Department of State since, if these views had any merit, it might be useful for the Department to consider them in the context of the overall problem. The CIA representatives suggested the meeting with Mr. McConnaughy in an attempt to alleviate the considerable amount of concern which was being generated in the Office of Special Operations of the Department of Defense which had reached the point where it could have jeopardized our current arrangements with OSD in the handling of the Downey-Fecteau case had some sort of cooperation from our side not been forthcoming.

25X1 5. A meeting was subsequently arranged with Mr. McConnaughy for 25 February 1957. However, on 23 February [] our liaison with OSO, advised that the furor had died down, and that he felt that OSO would not be inclined to press this matter much further. Col. Smith agreed in a telephone conversation on the morning of 25 February that he felt less concerned about the matter and at the suggestion of the undersigned agreed that the meeting with Mr. McConnaughy should be cancelled. The undersigned called Mr. McConnaughy and cancelled the meeting and advised him in general terms of the Defense Department's concern. Mr. McConnaughy said they would be happy to meet with Defense representatives at a later date should they wish to do so.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Chief, FE, []

Distribution:

25X1

Orig & 1 - []

25X1

1 - COPS

1 - C/FE

1 - C/PP

1 - O/S []

1 - FE []

1 - FE []

1 - FE []

~~SECRET~~